

left. Time has taken its toll. But for those remaining veterans, we owe them a debt of gratitude, and we should compensate them for service rendered on behalf of the United States. President Franklin Roosevelt called on the Army of the Philippines to stand with us, and they did. They fought and many were wounded. Some died in the process. If the United States is going to be known as a country that remembers its friends, we should remember our friends in the Philippines.

This provision is opposed by the Republican side—maybe not all, but some, and they object to it. They will have a chance to debate that, and I hope we can draw a conclusion soon and move this bill forward.

It is unfortunate that this bill, as important as it is for the veterans of the United States, has been subjected to a filibuster by the Republicans. They have done everything they can to stop this bill from coming to the floor. You would think that something as basic as veterans' benefits would be bipartisan. It certainly was in the committee. It should be on the floor of the Senate.

Last Thursday, Senator HARRY REID, the Democratic majority leader, tried to call up this bill, and he was told no; that he would have to file cloture. To put that in common terms, it means we would have to wait—wait over the weekend, not finish the bill last week—and have a vote, which we had earlier today. The vote was at 12 o'clock, a vote which the Republicans insisted on before going to the bill. The final total on that vote was 94 to nothing. There wasn't a single Senator of either political party who voted against proceeding to this bill.

So all we did was delay this bill for another 4 or 5 days, and we find ourselves at this very moment in the same position. The Republicans refuse to come forward and offer a plan for considering amendments under the bill. The time may come, and I hope it doesn't, when we face another cloture motion, another effort to stop this, a delay tactic from the Republican side of the aisle.

Last week, the Republicans used this delay tactic to stop a technical corrections bill, a bill which just cleaned up some mistaken language—poor grammar, poor spelling—in a bill passed years ago, and a bill that was important because it related to highway and bridge projects and that created good-paying jobs in the United States. The Republicans filibustered that bill. It went on for days and days and days. We thought, well, when it comes to a veterans bill, they are not going to use that filibuster again. But they did.

To date, the Republicans have engaged in 67 filibusters during this session of Congress. They have broken the record. I guess it is a source of pride within their Republican conference. The previous record was 57 filibusters over a 2-year period. They have broken that record in 16 months with 67 filibusters. Each and every time they en-

gage in these delaying and stalling tactics, it is an effort to stop legislation that would move us forward either in creating jobs, which are important for an economy that is facing a recession, or creating veterans' benefits for the thousands of veterans who expect and need a helping hand.

The Republicans continue to use this strategy. I don't know, perhaps someone has inspired them to do this, but I wish they would think twice. This country's veterans and their families expect us to work in a bipartisan way to try to help them. We have many times. But in this bill, in this critically important bill on veterans' benefits, the Republicans have thrown every obstacle in our path that they can legally under the rules of the Senate. That still leaves us with a major responsibility. We owe it to the veterans to get this job done.

I am glad Senator AKAKA is here, keeping his lonely vigil on the Senate floor. I know in a minute we are going to recess and come back in about an hour, but I thank him for his leadership on this important bill. I am hopeful after the break we can come back to the floor and finally find an accommodation and agreement on both sides of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during today's session, all time during any previous recess and any upcoming recess be charged postcloture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 4:30 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:30 p.m., recessed until 4:31 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. KERRY).

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LITTLE

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I am honored today to pay tribute to an outstanding member of my staff. When I was elected to the Senate, one of the first things I had to do was to select and hire a chief of staff. It didn't take long for me to find John Little. He came to work for me in December 2004, even before I was sworn in as a Senator.

When I first met John, he was legislative director for the junior Senator from Alabama, my colleague JEFF SESSIONS. I asked JEFF if it would be all right if I approached John and hired away a key member of his staff. He was very gracious, and he told me that al-

though he would be hard to replace, he thought it would be a great opportunity for John and wanted to make sure he didn't stand in his way in any way.

One of the reasons I came to Washington was to be engaged in the issues of the day and try to find solutions to the problems facing Floridians and all Americans. Having spent my entire public career in the executive side of Government, I didn't know the inner workings of the Congress and looked for someone with that skill and knowledge. John Little brought that legislative experience from day one to my office and has been an invaluable member of my staff and someone I have relied on and counted on every single day I have been in the Senate.

John's experience on the Hill started when he was a very young lawyer, fresh from passing the bar and eager to work in Government. He worked his way up from being a young staffer writing legislative correspondence to becoming a legislative aide handling policy in the areas of education and health care. John had the respect of his peers and would eventually become legislative director. He is known in the Hill community for being bright, aggressive, conservative and even-keeled. He knows the implications of both large and small shifts in public policy and the impact they might have on families and communities. He brought to the people of Florida a great amount of knowledge and experience and was a problem solver when we had problems we faced.

Through his work and in getting to know John personally, I have come to admire him greatly for his strength of character, a trait I greatly admire in him. In the face of challenges, John courageously rose to meet those challenges. He never wavered in his love of this institution or his love of this country, and he has served the people of Florida and the Senate, an institution that I know he loves, very well.

Over these last few years, John has demonstrated tireless dedication and loyalty to me and the people of Florida. We have successfully turned back attempts to breach Florida's ban on offshore drilling. We have sought and secured funds for restoring the Everglades. We have fought to ensure Florida's military people and bases have the resources they need to perform their duties. Throughout these and other achievements, John has remained humble and committed to ensuring the policies we have pursued were in the best interests of the people of Florida.

For those who know the life of a chief of staff for a Senator, it is not glamorous. The hours are long, the issues are complex and innumerable, and you rarely have the opportunity for an uninterrupted weekend. For these reasons, John has accepted a position in the private sector—a great opportunity for John. This speaks to his skill and knowledge as one of the great